



The Sack of Diamonds

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One day many years ago—
so long ago in fact that
the sky did not have stars as it
does now— a little old woman, who
lived alone except for her dog, had her
one hundredth birthday.

The townspeople rejoiced with her and there was much feasting and dancing in the streets. Then, to the surprise of everyone, the king himself appeared and gave the little old woman a sack of diamonds for her birthday.

“Oh, me! Oh, my!” said the little old woman. “What a rare gift, a sack of diamonds!”

“Yes, indeed,” exclaimed the people. “What a rare and valuable gift!”

Then the sun began to set and, after bidding the others good-bye, the little old woman hurried home with her sack of diamonds and her dog. She did not want to be out late as, unless the moon was out, the starless nights were very dark indeed.



The next morning the little old woman sat in her little chair in her little house and considered what to do with the sack of diamonds.

"It is a rare gift, indeed," she said to her dog. "But I already have everything I need. I have my little house, my garden, and my warm cloak which will last for many a year."

Suddenly she jumped up from her chair. "Here I am sitting," she said, "when I should be up and about hiding this valuable treasure so it will be safe from robbers."

No sooner had she said this than she dug a hole in her garden and buried the sack of diamonds. But the dog immediately dug them up and brought them back to the little old woman.

"Oh, me! Oh, my!" said the little old woman. "This will never do."



Next she hid them in the well. But when she took a drink of water, she had to spit it out because it tasted of the sack.

"Oh, me! Oh, my!" said the little old woman. "I will hide the sack of diamonds in the chimney!"

However, when she started a fire, all the smoke came into the house because the diamonds had stopped up the chimney.

"I cannot stand this," said the little old woman. "I will have to think of something else."

She strapped the sack on her back. But her back ached so much from the weight that she soon had to take the sack off.

"Oh, me! Oh, my!" she said. "What to do? What to do?" And so saying, she sat on the sack of diamonds, but it was so uncomfortable that she soon had to get up.

"I wish I were rid of these diamonds," she said to her dog. "They have caused me nothing but trouble."

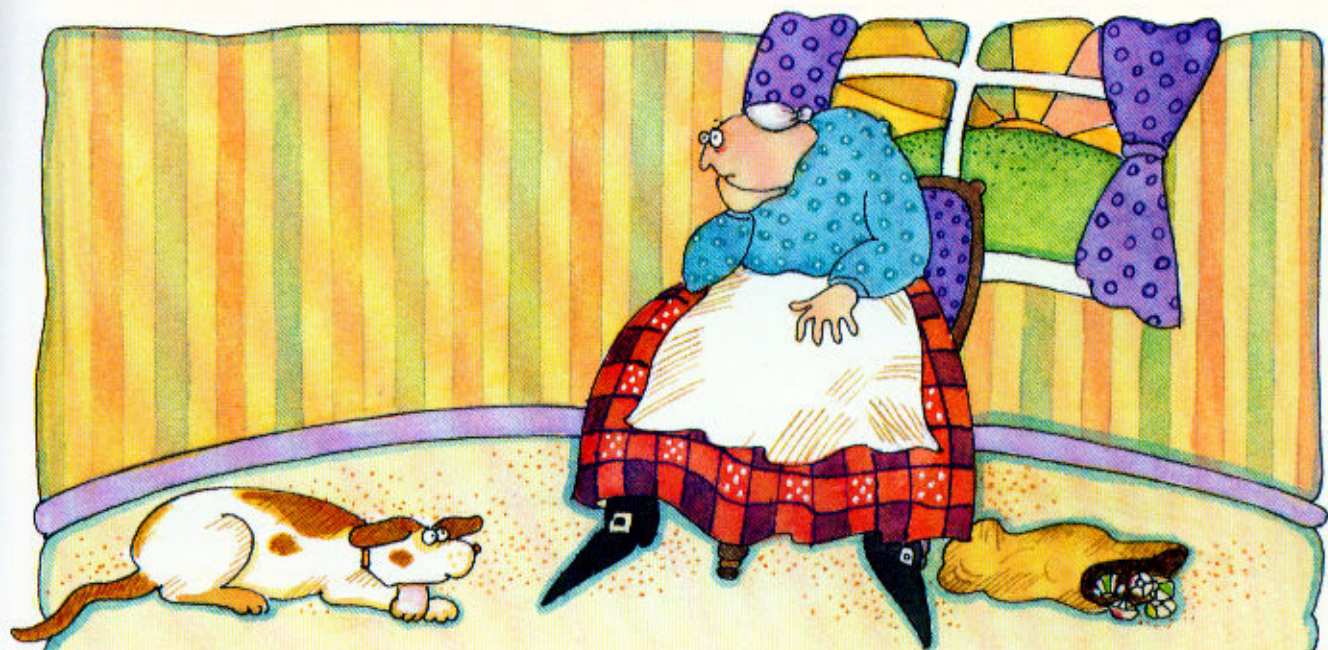
Early the next morning the little old woman loaded the sack into her wheelbarrow. She pushed the wheelbarrow to the town square, and there she left her burdensome treasure.

Then she returned home with the empty wheelbarrow.

"Oh, me! Oh, my!" she told the dog. "How glad I am to be rid of those diamonds!"

Just then there was a knock on the door. Some townspeople were standing on the doorstep. They set down the sack of diamonds.





"We have found the sack of diamonds the king gave you," they said. "It was in the town square."

"Imagine that!" said the little old woman.

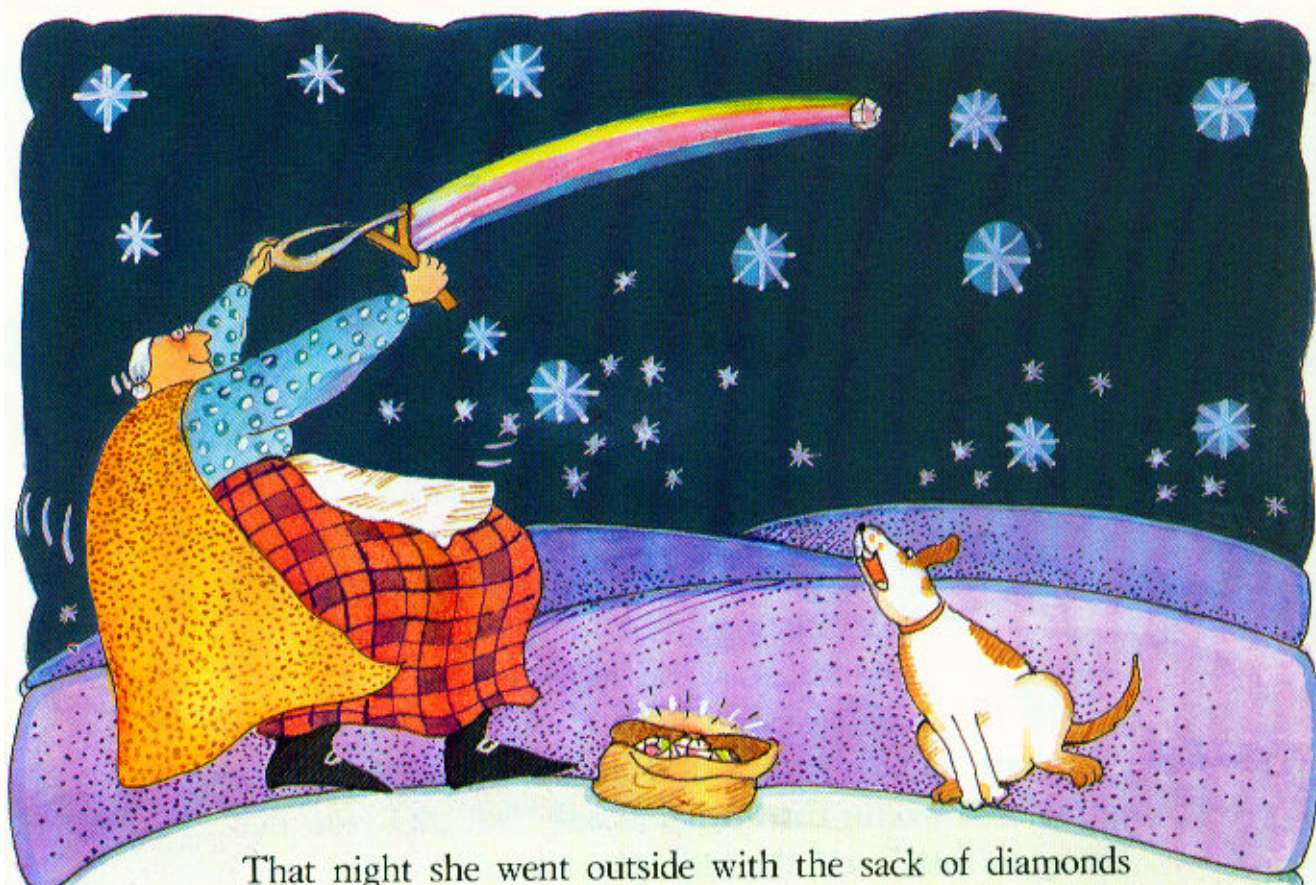
After the townspeople had left, the little old woman shook her head.

"Oh, me! Oh, my!" she said. Then she opened the sack and looked at the diamonds. They sparkled and sparkled. "The diamonds are pretty," she said to the dog, "but they are of no use to me."

Then she sat down in her chair, put her chin in her hand, and thought and thought.

Suddenly she jumped up. "Oh, me! Oh, my!" she said, "Now I know what to do. Why didn't I think of it sooner?"

She set to work immediately. Soon she had finished making a fine, strong slingshot.



That night she went outside with the sack of diamonds and the slingshot. It was pitch black outside, as it was most nights.

Then with her slingshot the woman shot one diamond after another into the sky. There the diamonds stayed, making the night sky bright.

By the time she had gotten rid of the whole sack of diamonds, the sky was filled with twinkling lights, where they still twinkle away to this very day.

The little old woman was well pleased with herself.

"Now the diamonds are of use to everyone," she said to her dog. "And now I can enjoy my old age in peace without that sack of diamonds cluttering up my house!"